

CLAIMS

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A computer system for providing automated reminders comprising:

5 memory means within a computer containing an object database of scheduled maintenance information for a plurality of distinct objects;

user input means for a user to enter into said computer a list of one or more of said distinct objects;

10 means within the computer for retrieving said scheduled maintenance information from said object database for each object in said list;

15 means for building within said computer a schedule of maintenance reminders for each object in said list based on said scheduled maintenance information retrieved from said database; and

20 reminder means for periodically transmitting to the user said maintenance reminders for each object in said list, each transmission containing said maintenance reminders for a corresponding interval of time.

2. The computer system of claim 1 wherein said reminder means is further defined as at least one of the following: means for transmitting said maintenance reminders in an email; means for transmitting said maintenance reminders in an electronic facsimile; means for generating a mailing to be forwarded to a user by regular mail; means for transmitting said maintenance reminders in a voicemail using automated text-to-speech conversion; means for displaying said maintenance reminders on a website accessible to a user; and means for transmitting said maintenance reminders to an electronic pager.

3. The computer system of claim 2 further comprising memory means within the computer containing a database of contact information concerning service providers capable of performing maintenance indicated in said maintenance reminders or providers capable of providing components used in maintenance indicated in said maintenance reminders; and

5 wherein said reminder means further includes means for transmitting with said maintenance reminders contact information for one or more of said service providers capable of performing maintenance indicated in said maintenance reminders or providers capable of providing components used in maintenance indicated in said maintenance reminders.

4. The computer system of claim 3 wherein said reminder means is further defined as a website accessible to the user, said website displaying said maintenance reminders and said contact information for said service providers, said contact information including an Internet link to said service provider.

5. The computer system of claim 4 wherein said user input means is further defined as a website accessible to the user, said website including a list of objects contained in said object database, and means for the user to select objects from said list of objects.

6. The computer system of claim 5 wherein said object database further includes instructions for performing maintenance on said objects; and

20 said reminder means further includes means for transmitting with said maintenance reminders instructions for performing maintenance indicated in said maintenance reminders.

7. The computer system of claim 6 wherein said object database further includes a purpose for performing maintenance on said objects; and

25 said reminder means further including means for transmitting with said maintenance reminders said purpose for performing maintenance indicated in said maintenance reminders.

8. The computer system of claim 7 further comprising means for the user to input a specific schedule period, said reminder means including means for transmitting said maintenance reminders to said user for said specific schedule period.

9. The computer system of claim 8 further comprising means for storing an identification 5 for each user, means for storing each of said list of objects and means for associating each user with a corresponding one of said stored list of objects.

10. A method for providing automated maintenance reminders via computer to a plurality of users, comprising the steps of:

building an object database within a computer containing maintenance information for a 10 plurality of object, the object database including information concerning scheduled maintenance for each object;

inputting into the computer a list of one or more of the plurality of objects to be associated with a specific user;

comparing, within the computer, the list and the object database, and retrieving the 15 scheduled maintenance information from the object database for each of the objects in the list;

building, within the computer, a schedule of maintenance reminders for each of the objects in the list based on the scheduled maintenance information retrieved from said database;

periodically transmitting to the user the maintenance reminders, each transmission containing the maintenance reminders for a corresponding interval of time; and

repeating said inputting, said comparing, said building and said transmitting steps for 20 each separate user to receive maintenance reminders using the same object database.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein said transmitting step is further defined as at least one of the following: transmitting the maintenance reminders via email; transmitting the maintenance

reminders via electronic facsimile; generating a mailing containing the maintenance reminders to be forwarded to the user by regular mail; transmitting the maintenance reminders in a voicemail via automated text-to-speech conversion; displaying the maintenance reminders on a website accessible to a user; and transmitting the maintenance reminders via electronic pager.

5 12. The method of claim 11 further comprising the steps of:

storing within the computer a database of contact information concerning providers capable of performing maintenance indicated in the maintenance reminders or capable of providing products used in performing maintenance indicated in the maintenance reminders; and

transmitting with the maintenance reminders contact information for one or more of the providers capable of performing maintenance indicated in the maintenance reminders or capable of providing products used in performing maintenance indicated in the maintenance reminders.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein said transmitting step includes displaying the maintenance reminders and the contact information for the provider on a website, the contact information including an Internet link to the provider.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein said inputting step includes the steps of displaying a list of objects contained in the object database on a website, and selecting on the website the objects from the displayed said list of objects for which the user would like automated reminders.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein the object database further includes instructions for performing maintenance on the objects; and

20 said transmitting step includes transmitting with the maintenance reminders instructions for performing maintenance indicated in the maintenance reminders.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein the object database further includes a purpose for performing maintenance on the objects; and

said transmitting step includes transmitting with the maintenance reminders the purpose for performing maintenance indicated in the maintenance reminders.

17.16. The method of claim 15 further including the steps of inputting a specific schedule period and generating a maintenance reminder for the specific schedule period.

5/8.17. The method of claim 16 further including the steps of:

storing an identification for each user;

storing the list of objects for each user; and

providing an association between each user and the corresponding stored list of objects.

18. A web-based maintenance reminder system comprising:

10 memory means within a computer containing an object database of maintenance information for a plurality of distinct objects;

a graphical user interface for displaying said plurality of distinct objects and for permitting a user to generate a list containing the objects for which the user would like to receive maintenance reminders;

15 means within the computer for storing a plurality of said lists, each of said lists being uniquely associated with a corresponding user;

means within the computer for retrieving maintenance information from said object database for each object in each of said lists;

20 means for building within said computer a schedule of maintenance reminders for each user, each maintenance reminder based on said time-based information retrieved from said object database, each schedule of maintenance reminders containing all maintenance reminders for each object in the object list associated with the corresponding user; and

reminder means for periodically transmitting to each user said maintenance reminders for a corresponding interval of time, each transmission containing said maintenance reminders unique to each user based on said list associated with said user.